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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR APRIL 25, 2007

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for April 25, 2007. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL:

ZAMAN: Suleyman Onatca, Chairperson of the Federation of the Adana Industrialists & Businessmen Association and Eastern Mediterranean Industrialists & Businessmen Association, said in a press announcement he made that Abdullah Gul was a presidential candidate who would successfully embrace all the sections of the society with his tolerant attitude.

GUNDEM / SABAH: According to Sabah daily, DTP Kars provincial party organization launched a "strange" campaign and established the following campaign slogan: "Yasar Buyukanit and his team should resign, and the lives of the youth be saved." DTP Provincial Chairman Alinak branded the latest developments in the region as "scary," and, said that the racism and ethnic clashes in the region were being escalated by the authorities. Alinak made a call to everybody to beat tin containers and produce loud noise until Buyukanit resigns from office. (Note: Gundem daily reappeared on shelves as the second ban which removed the paper from the shelves for 15 days expired.)

GUNDEM: Members of the Diyarbakir Bar Association, Human Rights Association and Mazlum-Der (Solidarity Association for Oppressed People) paid a visit to Ahmet Guvener, spiritual leader of the Protestants in Diyarbakir, and extended condolences because of the slaying of three Christians in a Bible publishing house last week in Malatya.

SECURITY:

ZAMAN ONLINE / GUNDEM: A 25-year-old second lieutenant was killed in a conflict between security forces and the terrorists in Sirnak's Kupeli Mountain. Meanwhile, the military operation that was started in the Amanos Mountains the previous day, has been extended to Hatay's Dortyol, Erzin, Reyhanli, and Hassa districts.

ECONOMY:

GUNDEM / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): The exports figures in the south-eastern region increased by 16.62 per cent in the first quarter of 2007, according to the data provided by South-eastern Exporters' Union.

HURRIYET ONLINE: The ground-breaking ceremony of the

Samsun-Ceyhan Crude Oil Pipeline (Trans Anatolian Pipeline) was held in Adana's Ceyhan district, however not many oil agreements with oil companies have been made so far, a point that reportedly raised questions in people's minds. In a press briefing after the ceremony, Hilmi Guler, Minister of Energy, when asked about whether a prerequisite imposed during the tender process on Calik company, the Turkish partner of the undertaking, which stipulated that an oil agreement would be made within the ensuing six months after Calik was awarded the bid, was met or not, the Minister said, 'The company was allotted a period of time then, and evaluation has been continuing within that time frame. There is not a problem about that.' Hilmi Guler further said that Samsun-Ceyhan Pipeline will not be a rival to the BTC (Baku-Tibilisi-Ceyhan Pipeline). The CEO of ENI, the Italian partner of the project, said that the estimated cost of the construction of the pipeline was between \$1.5 billion and \$2 billion.

EKSPRES: Hilmi Guler, Minister of Energy, said that, on that day, the 145th vessel was being loaded with petroleum at the BTC and \$513 million had been earned by Turkey to date within ten months. Guler said 234 million dollars of that total revenue was transferred to the Treasury. Guler claimed that Turkey has become one of the most effective countries in the world in the energy field with its achievements it has made over the last year. Guler also said that the experience gained in the BTC project would guide them in the construction process of the other pipelines.

SABAH (GUNEY) / BOLGE / EKSPRES / ZAMAN: Prof. Vahit Kirisci, Adana deputy (from AKP) and President of the Parliamentary Commission for Agriculture and Village Works, and, Kutahya deputy and (from AKP) and President of the Parliamentary Commission for Industry, Commerce and Energy, paid a visit to

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Adana Chamber of Industry (ACI). During the visit, Umit Ozgumus, Chairperson of ACI complained about the regulations binding the industrialists to allot an employment quota for members of certain professions. Ozgumus found it reasonable in the regulations to create employment opportunities for disabled people, but regarded the stipulation obliging the industrialists to employ some people from various professions as a burden in the current global competition.

#### CRIME AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

EKSPRES: As a result of a joint operation with the U.K. against human trafficking activities in Mersin, which lasted nearly 6 months, Mersin Security Directorate caught nine snakeheads operating in Mersin and apprehended them.

#### CULTURE / SOCIETY / ENVIRONMENT

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA) / GUNDEM / SABAH / EVRENSEL: Following the exhumation of the coffin of an 8-year-old boy, who died on April 22 in a village of Van's Caldiran district, in order to conduct autopsy after authorities suspected about the cause of child's death, panic reportedly struck local people who feared that the boy might have died because of an infectious disease. Seventy-two people in the district, who showed similar symptoms of fever, nausea, etc., have been taken under hospital care. None of the patients' health conditions are reported as severe, and blood samples taken so far did not reveal any viral disease such as bird flu. The doctors, who say that the final results would be taken today, are of the opinion following the initial examinations that the symptoms of the patients are that of common flu, not that of a lethal viral disease. Sabah daily reports the cause of the death of the child as meningitis and the other patients, most of whom were children, were suffering from poisoning. Gundem daily reports that Governor's Office decided to send a team of doctors to the village and authorities will conduct tests on the water used in the village and its environs.

GUNDEM / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Shepherds in a village of

Sanliurfa found the corpse of a 39-year-old woman buried in a pit in an open field area nearby the village. Police started an investigation and the body of the victim has been sent to the forensic authority in Adana. The woman was reported as disappeared one month ago.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Toroslar district municipality in Mersin painted a 4500-square-meter Turkish flag on the side of the Taurus Mountains which faced the city. The mayor of the district (from MHP) and deputy governor attended the opening ceremony at the venue of the flag which is reportedly the biggest Turkish flag in the country.

SABAH (GUNEY): Journalists criticized Deputy Governor Hatay for allowing only the journalist(s) from Hurriyet daily to watch the performance of the "Chorus of Religions" in Hatay. Journalists from Ihlas News Agency, Sabah and NTV were banned from watching the event.

BOLGE / EKSPRES: Thirty Arab journalists and media members from Syria, Jordan and Lebanon, who were invited to Turkey by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to raise their awareness about Turkey, came to Adana province and toured the city. The journalists were invited for a nine-day program in Turkey which will cover Adana, Konya, Bolu and Afyonkarahisar provinces. A Turkish Consulate official in Aleppo said that program's aim was to promote the tourism potential of Turkey and attract more visitors from the neighbouring countries.

ZAMAN / SABAH (GUNEY) / BOLGE / EKSPRES / HURRIYET: An exchange of fire resulted when three extorters attempted to squeeze money from a business owner in Adana. The owner of the business killed one of the extorters and wounded the other two as he retaliated after he was wounded by initial shooting of one of the extorters.  
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